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Department
of Human
Services

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(517) 373-7394

Articles in Today's Clips

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

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Donna Yost asks judge to release her from prison for retrial

Posted by [Crystal McMorris | The Bay City Times](#) April 22, 2008 08:12AM



Cathy Layman | Times Photo

Donna Yost asked Bay County Circuit Judge William J. Caprathe that she be released from prison while she awaits a new trial so she can attend the wedding of one of her daughters.

"I'd like to ask you for my freedom today," Donna A. Yost told the judge, "because I didn't do nothin' wrong."

Yost last appeared before Bay County Circuit Judge William J. Caprathe nearly two years ago, when he sentenced her to life in prison without the possibility of parole. A jury convicted her in April 2006 of first-degree felony murder for the death of her daughter Monique in 1999.

Last month, the state's appeals court overturned that verdict and vacated that sentence. Prosecutors said they plan to appeal to the state Supreme Court, but have not yet done so.

On Monday, Yost asked the judge to free her on her own recognizance while she awaits a new trial.

"My oldest daughter is getting married on the 26th of this month," Yost said, "and I would like to walk her down the aisle."

After hearing oral arguments from defense attorney Edward M. Czuprynski and Assistant Bay County Prosecutor Sylvia Linton, Caprathe said he needed time to research the law and would issue a written decision.

Czuprynski argued that Yost should be free without bond, as she was during the five years between the time she was charged with murder and the time a jury convicted her.

"The court granted her a PR bond when the charges were reinstated, and during those five years, there were no violations," Czuprynski said. "There is no threat of flight here. She had the chance and didn't take off."

"She is a presumed innocent woman as she sits here today," Czuprynski said. "It would seem paramount that she be given her freedom. Let her begin a normal life again."

Yost, in a blue-and-orange jumpsuit and her hair in a tight bun, was brought to the hearing from the Robert Scott Correctional Facility in Plymouth.

Linton argued that case law allows Caprathe to refuse bond for Yost, and said the prosecutor's office plans to appeal the appeals court ruling.

The appeals court found that several rulings made by Caprathe during Yost's trial were in error, and deprived her of a fair trial. Allowing certain testimony while excluding other testimony resulted in an improper trial, according to the appeals court, therefore rendering the jury's verdict moot.

Yost's daughter, Jessica Davis, 23, said she had hoped for her mother's release on Monday.

"It's painful," she said. "They can't leave her alone."

Yost's case has featured a host of divergent rulings and appeals since she was first charged with murder in 2000. The first appeal came from the prosecutor's office after Bay County District Judge John C. Leaming ruled, after a six-week hearing, that there was not enough evidence to order Yost to trial.



Shaken baby trial to open

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

GRAND RAPIDS -- The man charged with shaking to death an 8-month-old girl is on trial this week. Testimony was expected to begin today in Kent County Circuit Court in the case against Jeffery Mata, 22, who faces life in prison on a felony murder charge after the July 10 death of Lucretia Teunis. Mata was baby-sitting the infant at 1924 Coldbrook Circle NE when the incident occurred, police said.

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KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Police probe baby's death

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

BY REX HALL JR.

rhall@kalamazoogazette.com

388-7784

KALAMAZOO -- Detectives are investigating the suspicious death of an infant found this morning on a bus at the Kalamazoo Transportation Center, police said.

Officers performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the 3-month-old boy after his mother reported he was unresponsive at about 5:15 a.m., said Scott Merlo of Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. The infant was pronounced dead at a hospital.

The mother had traveled to Kalamazoo from Texas and had been sleeping on an Indian Trails bus when she awoke and realized the infant wasn't breathing. The baby was in a carrier attached to the front of his mother's body.

An autopsy is to be conducted. ``Further investigation has to be conducted to determine the cause of death so we can either label it criminal or accidental," Merlo said.

Police did not immediately release the name of the woman or infant.

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Muskegon Chronicle

Board delays vote on child-care cuts

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

By Teresa Taylor Williams

ttwilliams@muskegonchronicle.com

MONA SHORES -- The Mona Shores Board of Education struggled to make a decision regarding cuts to the district's child-care and latchkey program on Monday, so it put off action until next month.

The board came to Wednesday's meeting prepared to vote on budget cuts to the program, which has had a budget deficit the past three years.

Mona Shores Director of Finance Michael Schluentz recommended the school board eliminate health, dental, vision and life insurance coverage for employees, cut the latchkey coordinator position and implement a 2008-09 wage freeze for the 25 child-care and latchkey employees. This would result in a total annual savings of \$68,561.

But the decision to make cuts in the program proved a tough one as board members grappled with how to maintain quality, yet break even. They approved tabling the issue until next month's meeting. The board is expected to discuss the possible cuts at its May 5 work session, and a vote could occur at its May 12 board meeting.

Last year, the Mona Shores Community Child Care Center ended with a \$43,193 deficit, and to date, that figure is \$35,682. Revenues as of January were \$335,043, and expenditures were \$370,725.

The program has been subsidized by the school district's general fund.

During public comment, parent Shannon Conrad asked the school board to visit the child-care program at Ross Park Elementary to see the lives that are being positively affected.

"I urge you to go and see how learning is taking place. I urge you to make cuts as far away from the children as possible," said Conrad, who, along with her husband, are teachers at the high school and use the child-care service. "My husband and I are definitely better teachers because of the child care. We never worry, which helps us do our jobs."

Superintendent Terry Babbitt told the school board it's important to remember that the district is projected to have a \$1.7 million general fund deficit next school year. Last week, the school board met to discuss looking at areas to make cutbacks. He told school board members to keep in mind that they would hear other "passionate" stories in the midst of the budget-cutting process.

Board Secretary Jeanne Cooper-Kuiper and trustee David Kitchen were vocal in their opposition of Schluentz's recommendation. Cooper-Kuiper said it's not right to tamper with employee benefits.

"That program has more value than is shown on the budget balance sheet. I'm still for looking for a way to balance their budget, but not on the backs of the people who work there. Those who are loving and caring for our kids should not be treated like they are second class," said Cooper-Kuiper. "If it takes money from the general fund, we should support that. We are in the business of education and children."

Cooper-Kuiper and Kitchen, along with Vice President Stuart Jones, said they used the service for their children.

Jones said he has mixed feelings because he's not comfortable with general fund dollars taken from the cash-strapped district to help sustain the program. He reminded the school board that when it was created in 1997, there was an agreement that it would break even and be self-sufficient.

"No one is debating the high quality of the child care and the impact it has," Jones said. "We don't like making this choice, but we're taking taxpayer dollars and subsidizing the cost of child care, and I do worry about that a little bit."

Schluentz suggested the school board consider future cuts, such as elimination of before-school latchkey care at Campbell and Lincoln Park elementary schools, for a combined savings of \$3,740 annually. Another possibility is to maintain control of the program while privatizing, or contracting services through a third party, a savings of \$29,500.

"This is the next step and we're hoping we won't have to go that far," said Schluentz. "We hope to make changes to balance out funds so we won't have to make these cuts."

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Michigan Report

April 21, 2008

OFFICIALS RAISE ALARM ABOUT PENDING MEDICAID REGULATIONS

State officials and executives with advocacy groups warned on Monday that controversial federal Medicaid regulations could cost the state more than \$750 million a year in federal funding, and force the end of some services to low-income families and individuals unless they are blocked by Congress. A vote in the U.S. House is slated for Tuesday on legislation that would put a one-year moratorium on the regulation changes. The bill, H.R. 5613, was reported unanimously from the Commerce Committee that U.S. Rep. John Dingell (D-Dearborn) chairs. Similar legislation is in process in the Senate. Meanwhile, Mr. Dingell said by telephone at a media briefing as much public support is needed for the legislation to help overturn a threatened veto by President George W. Bush.

Lynn Jondahl, board chair for the Michigan League for Human Services, called the proposed regulations the "seven deadly regs" because of the potentially devastating effect they could have on medical services for low-income residents.

In fact, Community Health Director Janet Olszewski as well as Mr. Dingell said the regulations could have a disastrous effect on health care for all residents, because one regulation would cut federal support for graduate medical education, which helps pay the cost of resident physicians in hospitals. While those doctors provide much of the care for Medicaid recipients, they go on to become the physicians in practice who attend to all residents. With the state already projected to have a shortage of thousands of physicians as older doctors retire, cutting off access to residents could exacerbate that situation.

Mr. Dingell also said the regulations could cost Michigan as many as 15,000 jobs so it would have a damaging economic effect.

The regulations "could wreak havoc, and havoc is not too strong a word," Ms. Olszewski said.

Over a five-year period, the regulations could cost the state a total of \$3.9 billion in federal monies.

A congressional study of the regulations estimated they could cost all the 50 states a total of \$49.7 billion over five years.

The regulations would also take effect before October, one is already in effect, and they would establish cost limits for public providers, limit payments for graduate medical attention, limit payments for hospital outpatient services, limit so-called provider taxes, limit coverage of rehabilitative services, limit payments for school administrative and transportation services, and eliminate targeted case management.

The regulations were proposed by the Bush administration as a cost savings, but Mr. Dingell said that the president is philosophically opposed to the programs and the administration has refused to discuss the proposals. The administration has "a closed mind and closed eyes" to the potential effect of the proposed regulations, he said.

And opposition to the regulations is bipartisan, Mr. Dingell said, with the bill coming unanimously from his committee and at least four members of Michigan's Republican congressional delegation indicating their opposition to the regulations.

In addition the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures have both opposed the regulations.

Mr. Bush has indicated he would veto the legislation if approved, so Congress needs at least a two-thirds majority to ensure it could override the veto, Mr. Dingell said.

But there was also concern that Mr. Bush could sign the bill but then issue a signing statement saying he would not follow the legislation as he has on a number of other bills, Mr. Dingell said.

Michigan Democrats pitch sex education, contraception access plan to reduce number of unintended pregnancies

Posted by [Tim Martin | The Associated Press](#)

April 22, 2008 03:40AM

LANSING -- Democratic state lawmakers are introducing legislation they say would cut down on unintended pregnancies and protect women's health by expanding sex education and improving access to contraceptives.

Health insurance plans that cover prescriptions would have to include coverage for contraception. Women who are sexually assaulted would be offered information about and access to emergency contraception.

Some of the ideas aren't new and others have drawn opposition in the past, including from some conservative lawmakers and religious groups.

But supporters of the plan say they are hopeful they will reach a broad agreement on the legislation, most of which will be introduced in both the state House and Senate this week. A few bills related to the package already have been introduced.

Supporters cited studies saying that nearly half of pregnancies among U.S. women are unintended. Improved education and access to birth control would help cut down on unintended pregnancies and abortions, as well as sexually transmitted diseases, lawmakers said while detailing the legislation Monday at the state Capitol.

In a study released last month, researchers at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found at least one in four teenage American girls has a sexually transmitted disease. The most common is a virus that can cause cervical cancer.

"There's only one way to change these numbers, and that's by prevention," said Rep. Rebekah Warren, D-Ann Arbor.

One of the measures aims to require sex education, including but not limited to abstinence, as early as middle school. The legislation likely will include a

way for parents to opt out of the instruction for their children under certain circumstances.

Other measures are aimed at expanding access to birth control for low-income women.

"This is not a pro-choice initiative," said Sen. Gilda Jacobs, D-Huntington Woods. "This is a proactive initiative."

Some of the measures will have opposition. Faith-based organizations, for example, have been against proposals that would mandate they cover contraception through their prescription drug plans offered to employees and their families.

Providing more access to birth control for low income women would take away money from other medical programs, said Dave Maluchnik, a spokesman for the Michigan Catholic Conference.

"It would take from Medicaid and reallocate money to non-emergency, non-proven services," Maluchnik said.

Supporters of the legislation say it would save the state money through reduced social services costs, although there would be some initial costs associated with the plan. The overall package has not yet been reviewed by the Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal agencies.

Facts sheet

Legislation: Some legislation that supporters say would cut down on unintended pregnancies and protect women's health through expanded sex education and access to contraceptives will be introduced at the state Capitol this week. Other bills in the package have been introduced.

Statistics: One in four teenage American girls has a sexually transmitted disease, according to a recent study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Opposition: Some of the proposals in the package previously have drawn opposition from some conservative lawmakers.

Mich. doctors, nurses, students back health care ballot proposal

BY DAWSON BELL • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • APRIL 22, 2008

LANSGING -- A campaign to put a ballot proposal before voters in November that would make affordable and comprehensive health care coverage a constitutional right in Michigan picked up the endorsement of several health care groups Monday.

Organizations representing primary care and family physicians, a statewide nurses union and medical students are backing the Healthcare for Michigan campaign because they say the state's health care system is in crisis. Uninsured patients are going without care and overwhelming emergency rooms, the groups said at a series of news conferences across lower Michigan.

Michelle Debbink, a medical school student at the University of Michigan, likened health care in Michigan to warfare, with patients as the casualties.

"We're in the trenches ... hearing patient horror stories," Debbink said. The campaign needs to collect the signatures of 380,000 registered voters by July 1 to qualify the proposal for the Nov. 4 ballot. Healthcare for Michigan Director John Freeman said Monday about 100,000 signatures have been gathered so far.

If approved by voters, the measure would require the Legislature to "pass a plan that, through public or private measures, controls health care costs and provides for medically necessary preventive, primary, acute and chronic health care needs."

The state's two most influential health care provider organizations -- the Michigan Hospital Association and the Michigan State Medical Society -- have not yet endorsed the proposal.

April 21, 2008

DOCTORS, NURSES BACK HEALTHCARE BALLOT PLAN

Groups representing physicians and nurses around the state lent their voices Monday to a proposal that would ensure affordable healthcare coverage for every resident.

The Healthcare for Michigan proposal would constitutionally require the Legislature to develop a program that would ensure either public or private healthcare coverage for every resident.

The medical groups said the proposal would ensure proper care for all residents and control the costs for that coverage.

"As medical professionals on the frontlines of the healthcare debate, we stand behind the Healthcare for Michigan proposal because it will help rein in high healthcare costs and protect our families by protecting access to quality, affordable healthcare," said Lennox McNeary of the National Physicians Alliance. "This proposal will help ensure long-term healthcare security. It will help not only those people that currently don't have health insurance but also help those who do but live in fear of losing it."

"As nurses, the members of the Michigan Nurses Association see the terrible consequences when people don't get treatment or fail to catch a disease in its earliest stages, and that's why healthcare access is so important," said Ken Fletcher of the Michigan Nurses Association. "When people wait until the last minute to get medical treatment, it drives up cost and puts lives at risk. We need to all work together on this important issue and Michigan's nurses strongly believe that the best solution is the Healthcare for Michigan ballot proposal."

Other groups lending their support to the proposal at Monday's event were the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians, the Michigan Osteopathic Association, the Association of Primary Care Physicians, Michigan Chapter of the American Medical Students Association, Michigan Primary Care Association, and Community Health and Human Services Center.

"This ballot proposal forces Lansing politicians to do what they should be doing all along, and that is to put partisan politics aside and fix the healthcare crisis that is killing Michigan businesses and leaving our people behind," said John Freeman, chair of the [Healthcare for Michigan Ballot](#)

[Committee](#). "Too many people are just one pink slip away from bankruptcy and losing their jobs. The outrageous cost of healthcare is breaking the backs of businesses and hurting job creation in our state, and that's why we need a change. We can't wait for Washington. Michigan is ready to act now."



Supporters say health care proposal on track

4/21/2008, 6:28 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Supporters of a proposal aimed at boosting health care coverage in Michigan say they are on track to qualify for the November ballot.

The measure would require the state Legislature to pass laws ensuring that every Michigan citizen has affordable and comprehensive health care coverage.

Healthcare for Michigan must collect and turn in about 380,000 valid voter signatures by late June or early July at the latest. Group organizers say their signature collection is on pace to make that goal.

The campaign made stops across Michigan on Monday with some doctors and nurses representing groups that support the proposal.

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Affordable health screenings offered

By MATT DECEMBER
Source Staff Writer

Residents of northern Macomb County will have an opportunity to obtain inexpensive and free health screenings this week.

The Romeo-Washington-Bruce Parks and Recreation Department will play host to Project Healthy Living 2008 at the Romeo Senior Center, 361 Morton Street, on April 22, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The health fair is open to anyone older than 18 and will feature basic health tests at affordable prices.

“Project Healthy Living is supposed to bring low-cost or free health testing to different areas,” said Debbie Webber, the program coordinator at the senior center. “It is quite a bit less expensive than going to the doctor. For people who don’t have health insurance, this is very helpful.”

Free tests of height and weight, blood pressure and vision, as well as counseling, referrals, health education, displays and information will be offered.

Aside from the free tests, the event also makes available optional laboratory evaluations and screenings, including blood panel tests, iron blood tests, cancer antigens, C-Reactive proteins, H. Pylori blood tests and take-home colorectal cancer kits.

These tests run from \$5 to \$40. These prices could mean a savings of several hundred dollars over getting some of the same tests at a doctor’s office.

Other services that will be available include informational panels regarding Alzheimer’s disease, a pharmaceutical panel where participants can ask questions of a pharmacist and more.

While the tests are offered to anyone older than 18, non-invasive tests may be offered for ages 5-17, with parental consent. For information about the availability of these non-invasive tests, call 313-531-9108.

This year there are only two Project Healthy Living sites in Macomb County, so Webber said she expects the event to be busy.

“This allows people to have screenings done with a lack of insurance,” Webber said. “It becomes affordable again.”

For more information, call 752-9601.

Early Childhood Exhibit proceeds go to Northville Civic Concern

By Pam Fleming

OBSERVER AND ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER

April 20, 2008

When the children created the artwork for the Northville Public Schools' Early Childhood Center's Children's Exhibit, they only cared about having fun.

But, their creations will soon help feed local needy residents.

Proceeds of \$1,047 from the display's raffle on April 11 at the Northville Community Senior Center will benefit Northville Civic Concern, an all-volunteer local organization whose purpose is to help those in need with food. The organization assists about 100 families in the city of Northville and Northville Township and is funded primarily by the contributions of Northville residents.

Most of the items at the benefit were purchased by the children's parents or other family members. Organizers of the fundraiser requested that money raised be used to support children's causes. Those who were interested in a particular item placed their name and phone number on a ticket and placed it in a bag next to the item. The winners were contacted later.

Featured each April, Month of the Young Child, the exhibit is made up of unique displays of art that students worked on for months.

"As advocates for the rights of children and their many ways of expressing themselves, we found this event an ideal way to put the community focus on children," said Eileen Freeman, program coordinator, Early Childhood Center. A special presentation that explained the work that went into some of the displays took place at the end of the April 8 Board of Education meeting at Old Village School.

"We celebrate those who fill our world with wonder, innocence, discovery

and magical moments,” Freeman said. “This exhibit is a part of the celebration.”

Activists, County Officials Debate Decision on Housing Program

By Shaun Hittle

Kalamazoo Weekly

Area homeless advocates are questioning a decision made by the Kalamazoo County Housing Commission at their March 6th meeting that amends guidelines regarding eligibility for one of the county's housing programs.

The program, commonly referred to as the "housing voucher program," provides housing subsidies to low or no-income homeless persons in Kalamazoo. Recipients of the program are required to pay 30 percent of their income towards housing while in the program.

A motion made at the meeting calls for recipients of the program to show signs of progress towards financial stability within six months, or face the possibility of losing their spot in the program.

The advocates say they worry that the changes will lead to vouchers being taken from recipients who are unable to find employment within six months. And for some formerly homeless people, that six month timeline doesn't allow for an adequate adjustment period.

Lena Haynes, who has been a recipient in the voucher program since last May, said that it has taken her a year to get to a point where she feels she is able to start searching for employment. Haynes said that she worries the housing commission will use the new motion to take a voucher away from a recipient if they can't find a job within the six months.

"They're going to yank your voucher (if you don't have a job)," said Haynes.

The language of the motion reads: "Voucher recipients are expected to show demonstrable progress towards self-sufficiency after six months." The Housing Commission, which is comprised of five members, voted the motion in 3-0, with two commissioners absent.

Dave Artley, Director of the Office of Resource Development for Kalamazoo County, has been attempting to clarify the ramifications of the decision through e-mails after a quick backlash from housing advocates after the decision was made.

“...(The motion) was a vote to more clearly state an expectation realizing that it will mean different things to different people...,” Artley said, leaving the door open for interpretation by the Housing Commission when reviewing the vouchers.

Michigan Organizing Project Director John Musick, who has been involved in advocacy for the voucher program but was not present at the meeting, called for plans to strategize in order to have the decision reviewed. Musick’s comments also highlighted the difference in interpretation between county officials and the activist community regarding the decision.

“I am personally outraged that the Kalamazoo County Housing Commission voted last night to end housing vouchers for those with no income after six months,” Musick said in an email sent to various members of the community.

Housing Commission member and Kalamazoo City Commissioner David Anderson downplayed the significance of the motion. “(There is) no real change in policy,” Anderson said, who also emphasized that the voucher program is meant as a temporary program for recipients and that measures should be taken to monitor progress by recipients.

(Author’s note: Shaun Hittle is on the Board of Directors for the Open Door/Next Door Shelter, which monitors two of the county voucher recipients. However, Hittle has not had any direct involvement in the administering of the program.)

STURGIS JOURNAL

[Print this story](#)

Walking over poverty

BY TERRY KATZ

STURGIS JOURNAL

[Print Page](#)

The 37th Sturgis Area CROP walk will be held Sunday afternoon, continuing a prominent tradition.

"CROP" stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty.

Veteran organizer Earl Arend said the Sturgis Area CROP Walk is the oldest in Michigan.

"In our 36 years of walking, we've raised \$368,371," Arend said.

This year's goal is 250 walkers with pledges totaling \$13,000.

Last year, 230 walkers turned in pledges for \$12,130.

Arend said the money raised will be shared by the local Salvation Army (60 percent) and Burr Oak Food Pantry, 40 percent.

Honorary chairperson is the Rev. Keith Treman of First United Methodist Church.

Sturgis is one of only a few Michigan areas that have participated for more than 30 years.

Other cities with a long history are the Jackson area, Greater Lansing, Kalamazoo Valley, Lakewood Area, Lenawee/Adrian, Midland, Tri-Cities (Grand Haven) Washtenaw/Ann Arbor and Williamston/Webberville.

CROP was organized in Michigan in 1947. History records show that CROP volunteers have collected \$56 million in farm commodities, clothing, blankets, kits and cash in the last 60 years.

Arend said CROP hunger walks are special because they are community-based and interfaith.

He pointed out that hungry people in developing countries typically walk as much as six miles a day to get food, water and fuel and to take their goods to market.

"We walk to be in solidarity with their struggle for existence. We walk because they walk," Arend said.

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Michigan Department of Human Services News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Colleen Steinman (517) 373-7394

Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force formed

Charged with formulating outcomes that protect Michigan's children

April 22, 2008

Michigan Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed and former director C. Patrick Babcock today formally launched the Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force. Ahmed and Babcock outlined the task force's goals, including setting the outcomes that will drive radical reform of Michigan's child welfare system.

The task force draws together committed individuals from private and public agencies, legislative leaders, advocacy groups and parents and children themselves who have experience with the system. The task force will be co-chaired by Babcock and Carol Goss, president and CEO of the Skillman Foundation. Babcock served as director of what was called the Department of Social Services from 1987 to 1991.

"Despite its challenges, Michigan's child welfare system has many underlying strengths," said Babcock, who emerged from retirement to assume his role. "This is a challenge that I simply could not resist."

The task force is charged with four principal priorities, including:

- Developing the guiding principals underlying the child welfare system.
- Reviewing and assessing current federal and state standards on outcomes.
- Recommending measurable outcomes for all child caring agencies, both

public and private.

- Recommending action steps for state government to achieve these outcomes.

"We all are committed to protecting Michigan's most vulnerable children," Ahmed said. "We are focused on the end game – what will be the best outcome for each child, and what's the best way to get there."

Goss said: "When it is necessary for children to be under the supervision of DHS, we want the best possible practices and policies to be in place. We commend the department for taking on this important work."

With more than 60 members, the task force will represent youths in care, families, state legislative and executive policy makers, child welfare and health professionals, public and private service providers and advocates. Members are appointed by the DHS director and will meet monthly. Smaller work groups may meet more frequently. A final report of its findings and recommendations is due in March 2009.

"We are proud to be part of this broad effort to improve Michigan's child welfare system and the lives of thousands of children," said Jack Kresnak, president and CEO of Michigan's Children, an independent child advocacy organization where the group gathered to announce the task force. "We hope that the joining of many voices providing different perspectives will help us to create the best situations for the most vulnerable of Michigan's citizens."

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs